

Point Three

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The monthly magazine of TOC H



Editorial

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Painting in Poperinge

Ross Bancroft

Having never been to Poperinge before and having never painted so much as a door frame in my life, let alone a large hall, the idea of this visit struck me as novel if not confidence building. The project group consisted of nine members under the leadership of Louisa Parish and Phil Walker. The members had varying involvement with Toc H and, it became apparent, varying experience of the kind of work we were to perform. The job at hand was to redecorate Talbot House's main hall, front to back, including the ceiling. We were allotted five working days for this task, with the Wednesday reserved for a visit to the various cemeteries, landmarks and museums of that area of Flanders. The work was actually finished ahead of schedule, so a day trip to Ypres was possible on the Saturday.

Living in the Old House for a week was an interesting experience greatly enhanced by an excellent guided tour of the house given to us by Jacques Rychebosch, our perfect host. However,

for me the most moving part of the week was Wednesday's tour. This began with an early morning look around the Poperinge Hop Museum — well set out and very informative. Now that we knew a little more about what we'd been drinking since our arrival, we progressed to more serious matters.

The Pool of Peace, our next stop, seemed to be a self contradiction; tranquil beauty created by high explosive, preserved as it should be by Toc H. We then visited Hill 60 and Hill 62, important landmarks on a changed landscape. Next came Gilbert Talbot's grave, followed by a walk around the museum and remaining trenches of Sanctuary Wood. The museum has an interesting array of World War One hardware but its display of photographs from that period had the most impact upon me. Tyne Cot, our next stop, is the largest cemetery for English soldiers of the Great War in this area — 34,957 men, some with names on the perimeter wall, some with graves. Then on to the Langemark German cemetery with its four statues at the far end which at first appear to be German soldiers, though they lose much of their form once you get closer. Dinner at a local restaurant was followed by the day's last visit; to Ypres for the Last Post at the Menin Gate. More names — 54,896 — to add to

the day's total and a fitting end to the day. By this point I'd lost count of the number of names we'd seen. What must be remembered is that behind each name lies a man — a dead man.

By Thursday the large areas of painting — ceiling and walls — had been finished, so the fine detail work and the gloss painting of the woodwork was begun. This was time consuming but hard work by all won the day. Friday saw the completion of Thursday's work, followed by a very 'smug' clear up! In the evening we had Christmas early, Belgian style, with a visit from St Nicholas to Talbot House. We sang carols, presents were distributed and the childrens' eyes lit up.

The local community must be praised for opening their hearts (and cafes) to us. We were treated extremely well wherever we went, including an afternoon visit to a school in Ypres to talk with the students learning English, and a local Ball which we attended on Saturday evening.

The work had been completed, most will agree, to a pretty good standard. The return trip was a little rough and more than one member of our party turned a delicate shade of green. Not me though — I was too busy feeling sad at leaving Poperinge.



Round and about

Photo: Border Counties Newspapers



Bowing out

Oswestry Branch has been planning its closure for some time, but its members wanted to do one further job together. They have a long history of working in the community, and decided that their last piece of work would be to provide two reclining chairs for their local hospital, and they are seen here at the presentation ceremony.

Christmas in Gloucester

On Christmas Day and Boxing Day a very interesting experiment was made in Gloucester city by an energetic and inspired teacher, Bill Lowe and his wife Jean.

Determined to make Christmas a time of welcome and warmth for the homeless, he obtained the use of the WEA premises during the holiday vacancy, the loan of massive Army field cooker (Calor Gas), portable 'loos', a TV with video tapes, selected ad hoc quantities of crockery, mattresses, food galore (a vast cauldron of stew bubbled throughout), and thus equipped proclaimed open house to all who had nowhere to go. There was a good response and the guests showed their gratitude by their helpfulness. Some weeks beforehand Bill had gone the rounds of various organisations compiling a roster of helpers and this was how Toc H came to be involved.

Bill himself is not a member of Toc H but as far as the Toc H spirit goes he and his wife are naturals.

Tubby Clayton once said that the business was not so much getting people into Toc H as getting Toc H into people. Perhaps we ought to be quicker at detecting whereabouts today the seed sown from the 20s onwards is bearing fruit!

Llandrindod Wells

'You don't have to feel out of touch, even if you do live in one of the country's more remote corners', writes George Dakin. The Toc H Branch in this small Mid-Wales town has been a strong influence in Welfare and Friendship affairs there for 54 years – and they're not about to stop, either! They continue to work hard and create a strong fellowship through their weekly meetings, and tackle the problems of loneliness in the community both individually and as a corporate job. Their Branch programme for November and December 1986 was full of all kinds of events – Concerts, Carol Services, Talks and Community Work. And as if all that isn't enough, they have members on the local Council and are involved with most of the other 'caring societies' in the town. Not surprisingly, they attract new members, and hope that by the time this is published they will have enrolled four more.

Friendly Umbrellas in Hythe

During November Hythe Branch invited representatives from other local organisations to come together to discuss the possibility of setting up an Umbrella Club in Hythe. What's an Umbrella Club? Tony Cock, who is the Chairman of the Hythe Branch, says that they are clubs for the mentally ill, and others, where there is a warm welcome, a sympathetic ear if needed, and a little refreshment.

There was a very good response to the Branch's initial invitation, and a small steering group has now been formed. A local church has offered the use of its hall and all necessary facilities, and plans are well advanced to open one afternoon each week.

In the middle of October a party of 34 members from the Colne and Orwell District set off for London. They were to spend the day looking around St Katherine's Dock and going to All Hallows Church. They had a splendid day, and by the time they arrived in London even the sun had come out.

St Katherine's Dock is a fascinating place. Close to the Tower of London and Tower Bridge it is home to a number of historic ships, some of which are open to the public. Some intrepid members of the party embarked, scrambling down ship's ladders, while others climbed to the top of Tower Bridge to get an excellent view of the Thames.

During the afternoon the whole party went on to All Hallows where they were warmly welcomed. They were shown around the Church – the first visit for some of the group – learned some of its history, and enjoyed its quiet stillness. The afternoon with a cup of tea followed by Evensong in All Hallows.

All who went found it an enjoyable and fulfilling day – have you tried it?

The Festive Season

Many Branches and Districts had a marvellous time making special efforts to spread good cheer around Christmas time. Among them, Crewkerne who entertained the staff and residents at an old peoples' home, and gave a most useful present of trays to the home. They went on from there to help to decorate their local hospital, and on 3 January still had enough energy and appetite to arrange and enjoy a splendid New Year's Dinner with 60 members and friends present. There is no truth in the rumour that they are still sleeping it off!

A Cardiff Anniversary

The Cardiff Joint Branch celebrated the 60th anniversary of the original Cardiff Branch of the League of Women Helpers on 18 November 1986. The start of a group was made in 1924 and Branch Status was granted on 8 November 1926.

A fine Service was held in the Trinity Methodist Church, Newport Road, Cardiff with Canon Hugh Potts, their Regional Padre as leader, and Rev James Power, once a Long Term Volunteer in Nottingham, and now curate of Cadoxton Barry Parish, as the preacher. Eighty members and friends were able to join them in their celebrations.

It was a very happy day and one that will be remembered, especially as the Service was written by James Power, a member of the present Branch.

Toc H in the swim

Well, would you take 13 children on a canal holiday – even if they were divided between two barges? In fact, they and the volunteers had a marvellous time on the Oxford Canal having what Alan Mason, of Market Harborough Men's Branch calls 'an unusual holiday'. The children were chosen from around the Market Harborough area because it was felt that they would benefit from such a holiday. The whole event was generously sponsored by the Everard Fund, a trust operated by Everard's Brewery.

The Branch has been running projects like this for some time, and is now looking for more volunteers – so if you live in the area and would like to help why not drop a line to Alan Mason, 43 Hammond Way, Market Harborough, Leics LE16 7JW. He'll be glad to hear from you.



The growing interest in visiting Talbot House, the birthplace of Toc H, means that there is a need for more people willing to take on the rewarding responsibility of leading parties.

A leaflet is now available giving guidance on all the practical aspects involved, making it easy for YOU to become a party leader. The leaflet is free and can be obtained from:

**International Officer
Toc H
1 Forest Close
Wendover
Aylesbury
Bucks HP22 6BT**

And now . . . The Twigs!

Cheryl and Andrew Stallard, of Wolverton in Milton Keynes, are third generation Toc H! 'So', says Gordon Parry, who is secretary to the Wolverton Branch, *'the Branch was especially delighted when the two of them came to say they, with seven of their friends, would like to form a Toc H Group.'* With support from Adrian Dudman, the member of staff in the area, they were soon under weigh and full of enthusiasm, and working on a project for the Summer.

Betty Scranney

Past members of the **Felpham Women's Branch** (now closed) will be delighted to know that Betty celebrated her 100th birthday recently. After her Branch closed she became closely associated with the Branch in Bognor Regis, primarily through Bognor's Pen and Book Club. She now lives in a nursing home in Bognor Regis. It had been a lifelong wish of hers to ride in an open carriage – on her birthday she was invited by Lady March to do just that. It just shows that if you wait long enough wishes do come true! Congratulations.

Lights in Worthing

Worthing Toc H Branch has been busy! With help from the Scouts and the Rotary Club the Branch has installed emergency flashing lights in 800 homes in the town and district. How many miles of wire and hours of work that represents I leave to your imagination, but it also leaves 800 households feeling less isolated and more secure.

Toc H by Cable

New Addington Branch enjoyed a new experience over the pre-Christmas period – they were on television. A show which they put on for local pensioners was recorded and put out over the cable television network during the Christmas holidays – not just once, but twice!

Is this a record?

Reg Plimmer, who is the Pilot of **Conwy Branch**, has written to tell us of the fund raising successes of Colwyn Bay member, Barry Johns. *During the course of 1986, says Reg, Barry collected a total of £939 in North Wales for Toc H and other charities.* Barry seems to excel in both house-to-house and street collections, and is an enthusiastic seller of flags. So if you find yourself in the area around Conwy and Colwyn Bay watch out for Barry – and take plenty of change!

Since 1970 **Hitchin Men's Branch** has collected the monies from the 'Sooties' in the Hitchin Public Houses for the National Institute for the Blind.

The first year's collection amounted to £62.90 but they now collect from 30 Public Houses who have 'Sooties' or 'Stockings' in one or more Bars, and the total collected this year was £675.79 and over the period from 1970 to the present, £5,133.88 has been forwarded to the Institute. Much of this has been in coppers as one can imagine, and on one notable occasion, one 'Sootie' contained £51.60.

The Branch empties the 'Sooties' and 'Stockings' twice a year, and feels this is a job any Branch with transport could do. You need not drink and drive!

About eight years ago they initiated The Social Club for the Blind, which is now run by a Committee of both blind and sighted members, one of whom is a Toc H member. Other members supply transport to the Club and the Ladies Branch organise the refreshments.



Photo: Worthing Advertiser

'In Focus'

What is the CEC and what does it do? In 'In Focus' this month John Kilburn, General Secretary of Toc H, surveys its work.

The Central Executive Committee of Toc H

John Kilburn

In the words of the Royal Charter, the Central Executive Committee '... shall be responsible for the management of the affairs of Toc H.' This means in practice that the CEC has a very similar range of responsibilities as a Board of Directors of a Company. Many of the weighty issues relating to the implementation of policy, the Movement's finances, staffing matters, and legal and administrative practicalities stem from discussions within the CEC. In examining how all this actually happens it is probably best to look first of all at the structure which exists to set up a CEC each year, and the regulations which govern who may and must be on it.

There are three sorts of people who make up the actual membership of the CEC (as opposed to being invited to attend). These are elected members, co-opted members and principal officers. There can be any number from eight to 18 elected members; there MUST be two co-opted members, and, currently, four eligible principal officers (ie the Director, the General Secretary, the National Chaplain and the Treasurer). There are other principal officers who are not members of the CEC (ie Patrons, Presidents, Vice-Presidents and Trustees) and the CEC has power to appoint others who may be; but at the time of writing there are only the four listed above.

Nominations for those who are prepared to stand for election at Central Council must be made by a Central Councillor and seconded by a member of Toc H. Nomination papers go out from Headquarters in June and have to be back by mid-August so that the 'profiles' (forms completed by candidates, plus sections by their proposer and seconder) can then be received by Central Councillors in time for Council in November, when they will vote for the candidates of their choice.

These forms give a range of information about anyone wishing to stand for the CEC, including year of membership, Branch, offices held, interest in any sub-committee, reason for seeking election, and views about present and

future policy. The proposer and seconder are asked to say why they believe the person concerned is a suitable candidate. Interestingly (and puzzling) there are some members who disagree strongly with this profile.

Those invited to attend are almost always staff, either as representatives from staff clumps (meetings of some staff held several times a year and involving all staff in toto) or in some specialist function where the CEC feels that the member of staff concerned has a necessary contribution to make.

The actual number present at CEC meetings has to be finely tuned. For instance, were 18 members elected and all members of the Wendover team invited, this could result in an unwieldy committee of some 27 people. Elected members certainly have a concern that there should be a sensible balance between the number of staff and themselves. On the other hand, given the need to set up several sub-committees (see below), pressure on members would be very great if only eight were elected. Twelve or so seems to be a good compromise, but it is nevertheless sometimes worrying if only a small number of names are put up for election. Not only does this remove any opportunity for Councillors to express real and meaningful choices via their votes; it may also lead to a time when fewer than a 'working number' might be elected, especially if a shortage of candidates were to coincide with a year in which several CEC members retired (which they must do when they have served for five consecutive years).

I hope all of the following is helpful in explaining how members of the CEC come to be elected. Among the matters mentioned above was the responsibility for some CEC members to serve on sub-committees, so a word about their number and functions might also be useful. At the time of writing the CEC has three major sub-committees, though, following the Council resolution on national project development, a fourth is currently being set up. The three are 'Finance & Properties' (which the CEC is required to appoint by the Royal Charter), 'Personnel' and 'Services'. The titles of the first two are self-explanatory, the third deals with all issues arising over Toc H in BAOR which are not covered by the other two (and sends representatives to the other sub-committees to make an appropriate input). This year the CEC made a ruling that the chair(wo)men of

sub-committees must be members of the CEC — previously it was open to a co-opted member to take the chair. By custom and practice the Treasurer 'chairs' the Finance and Properties Sub-Committee. All members must be members of Toc H.

The sub-committees vary in size and in balance between CEC, staff and co-opted members. The Personnel Sub-Committee is small, currently having had elected to it the Chairman of the CEC, two other elected members one of whom shall be the chair(wo)man, and one principal officer (the General Secretary). It is also usually attended by a member of the Finance & Properties Sub-Committee, and a member of the Services Sub-Committee if a 'Services' item is on the agenda. It is serviced by the Personnel and Training Officer. Both the other sub-committees are larger, mainly because they have more co-opted members (Finance & Properties has three CEC members, four staff members and six co-opted; Services three, two and four). When the National Project Development Sub-Committee has been set up it will have four CEC members, one staff member and nine co-opted members. (Every Region is represented.) Finally, the CEC has also ruled that its Chair(wo)man and Vice-Chair(wo)man, and its four principal officers listed above, shall be ex officio members of all sub-committees (except that the Chaplain shall not be a member of Personnel).

It was mentioned earlier that demands on CEC members can be very heavy. This is because the CEC itself meets at least six times a year, including residential weekends in December and September; and each of the sub-committees meets from four to six times a year as well. To an elected member in work, the load imposed by membership of (say) two committees, plus any working parties, ad hoc committees and special meetings, can result in a commitment of almost once a fortnight, and can involve travelling to London, Cromford (Alison House), Cuddesdon or (if on the Personnel Sub-Committee) anywhere else in the country where interviews for new staff might have been arranged!

With all this activity, the reader can be excused for wondering what business there can possibly be which takes up so much time, travel and effort. Typical CEC and sub-committee agendas may go a long way towards explaining this (the CEC also receives copies of the minutes of all its sub-committees).

The CEC agenda has a number of standard items such as matters arising from the minutes, correspondence and recommendations from sub-committees. Where an appointment of a principal officer is pending (as all three paid posts have been over the last two years or so) there are reports from an ad hoc committee set up to make recommendations. Other important matters have included Talbot House, Poperinge; a proposed BAOR commission; Presidents, Vice-Presidents and Trustees; Central Branch; recommendations to, and the business of, Central Council; policy over Toc H Centres; 'Point Three'; Toc H in Bangladesh; control of Toc H definitions, and a 'main issue' (a time deliberately set aside on the agenda to consider possible future policy in an important area). When it is realised that all of the foregoing have been distilled from just two agendas, then it will readily be recognised that the range of business in the CEC can be enormous.

The Personnel Sub-Committee is concerned with all matters to do with staff, including establishments and policy; salaries, pensions and conditions of service, interviews, appointments resignations and dismissals, job

descriptions, grievances, transfers and the like. In general responsibilities for these matters are delegated to it from the CEC, but any new proposals need to be ratified by the main Committee via a recommendation. (This proviso extends similarly to the other sub-committees.) Day to day matters are delegated to the Personnel and Training Officer, who is accountable to the General Secretary.

The Finance & Properties Sub-Committee deals with the sale and purchase of properties, and all matters of stewardship and expenditure related to them (eg insurance, surveying, decoration, maintenance and the like). It is also concerned with all accounting matters of income and expenditure, including those in BAOR, and their audit. Finally, it reviews the investments of the charity's capital, and the level of legacies, donations, giving to the family purse and other income. Day to day matters are delegated to the finance and properties officer who is accountable to the General Secretary.

The Services Sub-Committee is responsible for matters in BAOR. It has an input to all items of personnel and finance; and concerns itself fully with the

development of Toc H in BAOR. It is responsible for the management of the five clubs (in Berlin, Munster, Paderborn, Verden and Wolfenbittel); the running of the Toc H headquarters in Germany at Herford, and liaison with the Council of Voluntary Welfare Work (the umbrella UK organisation which co-ordinates the work of charities in BAOR and their relationship to the armed forces). Day to day trading matters are delegated to the Commission, and development matters to the Development Officer, both of whom are accountable to the General Secretary.

A short article such as this can only touch on the many and varied responsibilities and activities of the Central Executive Committee of Toc H. It is hoped that readers have found it an interesting and absorbing account of what it is all about, and that they may have been stimulated thereby to consider seeking election to it!

1987 Diaries

Lost your diary? Need another one? We still have a small stock left, and they are available from Headquarters, price 50p each, plus 20p P & P.

Bucks, Beds & Herts & North London **Cuddesdon Weekend** 24 - 26 APRIL

Invitation - Open

Rev Alan Johnson - Guest Speaker

£10 deposit

Total Cost £27

Enquiries to:

Joan Croft

22 Hawthorn Avenue

Chiswell Green, St Albans, Herts

Telephone: 53763

Wendover Open Day 9 July 1987

Members and friends are always welcome at Headquarters, but it can be difficult to respond to an open invitation to come when you like! So here is an invitation to you to come on 9 July, at any time during the day to meet the staff and see for yourself what goes on here. Why not bring a packed lunch and make a day of it? We shall be very glad to see you.

Lindridge House

APRIL 3 - 5 : REFLECTIONS. Rev Alan Johnson will help us to stop and think, both as individuals and together. We are keen to involve people on an equal basis with a wide range of beliefs as well as those who may not feel themselves to be committed to anything in particular.

Cost: £13 including £5 deposit.

APRIL 20 - 25 : EXPLORING DARTMOOR. Come and see Dartmoor in the spring and stay at our lovely old Toc H house. You'll need good walking boots, warm and genuinely waterproof clothing, a small day rucksack and a thermos flask. You'll also need plenty of energy!

Cost: £45 including £10 deposit.

JUNE 19 - 21 : LIFE IN A SMALL GROUP. Most of us spend some considerable time in small groups of people, either at work, at home or in our social lives. How do we behave in these groups? What goes on and why? This weekend is an opportunity to look honestly at our behaviour together by tackling a variety of specific tasks as a group. We shall also discuss frankly but sensitively the ways in which the group operates.

Cost: £14 including £5 deposit.

JULY 31 - AUGUST 2 : EXPLORING CHURCHES. With the help of an experienced tutor find out some of the things you can discover when you look at a church. There will be plenty of time to talk and opportunities for visits to local churches.

Cost: £18 including £5 deposit.

You can book your place by sending the appropriate deposit for the event to Jane and Philip Douch, Lindridge House, Lindridge Hill, Kingsteignton, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 3QE. Tel: Newton Abbot (0626) 65670.

Last November, Helen Powell, Development Officer at the Newark Street Community House, and Ken Prideaux-Brune, International Officer, visited Bangladesh to see the work of the Khasdobir Action Group, initiated by Peter East and supported by Toc H, in the village of Khasdobir in District Sylhet. In the first of three articles Ken reports on this visit.

The Struggle for



Khasdobir Primary School – Peter talks to children on their way to school.

I had anticipated the noise, the smells and the crowds, though anticipation did little to lessen their impact. What came as a complete surprise to me was the extraordinary beauty of the countryside. That first short drive from Sylhet airport was a revelation. We passed through the little, lumpy hill and gentle slopes of the tea gardens, the velvety green bushes all exactly the same height, as though they had been carefully manicured – a green and pleasant land for the spectator, though not, as we were soon to discover, for those who live and work there.

Peter took us first to the house of Harun Ahmed, who was to be our host and mentor throughout our stay. Harun is the 'headman' of the village of Khasdobir and is Peter's main colleague in all the work he's doing there. He's a short, round-faced, mild-mannered man who was initially shy and somewhat deferential in his approach to his foreign visitors. He's a remarkable, humble and deeply caring person and it became increasingly obvious how much the project owes to him. He is the sole breadwinner for a household of 56 people, all of whom are fed off just three gas rings. Where they all sleep, in a house with eight rooms at most, is a mystery which we were never able to solve.

After dropping our cases at the simple but clean and friendly Dargargate Hotel in Sylhet town (about a mile from Khasdobir), where we lived for our two and a half week stay, we were taken for our official welcome at the Khasdobir Primary School. We turned a corner and there suddenly was the building, familiar to us from photographs. The small playground, and the street outside, were full of children in their smart, green and white uniforms. More children were on the double outside staircase and on the upstairs verandah. Inside the gate a line of about ten small girls placed garlands round our necks and we were shown to seats for a short drill display. Then the children went to their classrooms and we were taken round and formally introduced to each class in turn. This was our first exposure to Harun's love of making long and flowery (and I suspect if we'd been able to understand them highly embarrassing) speeches at every possible opportunity. Then there was a welcome and relaxing cup of tea in the

staff room. While we were there the bell sounded for the end of the morning shift and the children filed out neatly. Those who had been standing in the street outside were the second shift, awaiting their turn. They now filed in and we had the embarrassment of another tour of the classrooms.

I didn't appreciate, that first morning, just what a remarkable building the school is for that area. It's a beautiful building and it's obviously well cared-for. The paintwork gleams and everything is clean and spotless. There's no sign of litter anywhere. We were told that even the headmaster himself has on occasions been seen with a dustpan and brush – a very significant gesture in a culture which too often depises cleaning, and indeed all manual labour.

But if it was not immediately obvious to us that the building was unusual it was quite clear from the outset that there was something very unusual indeed about the atmosphere of the school. The children were disciplined and orderly but at the same time quite obviously happy and enthusiastic, friendly and self-confident. When we later saw something of the stark poverty in which many of them lived that happiness and self-confidence seemed even more remarkable.

Toc H has done a good thing in helping to add a second storey to the school, enabling it to expand from 700 pupils to 1,200 (even more from January, when the new school year began). But the building itself is comparatively unimportant. What is really important is that remarkable atmosphere and that's the creation of Harun and Peter and the teachers and the members of the school committee. We can simply feel glad to have been allowed to make our little

contribution to a place which is so obviously special.

Every day when we passed the school children would cluster round to shake our hands and there would be great shouts of 'Hallo bhai (bhai means brother), Good morning bhai'. I'm told that when the British High Commissioner visited the school he too was greeted with shouts of 'Hallo bhai'. I hope he enjoyed it as much as we did.

During the first few days we were taken on a number of walks through the village of Khasdobir. Actually it's a collection of some 13 villages, though it wasn't easy for us, or even for Peter, to tell where one ended and the next began. It spreads either side of the main road from Sylhet town to the airport and is perhaps best described as a suburb. The total population is thought to be about 35,000. It's not an agricultural area, though some people have a few goats or a cow or a small vegetable plot. Most work, when they can find work, in what may loosely be termed the service sector. They are day labourers, pushers of tellagaris (the large handcart which is the main form of goods transport) or, the largest group, rickshaw drivers. The rickshaw is a heavy, solid-framed tricycle, carrying two people on the back. Pedalling it up even a slight slope demands a great deal of strength and stamina, for very little reward.

There are quite a number of expensive, detached bungalows in the village, each surrounded by a high brick wall, in some cases topped by barbed wire. Many of them have been built by 'Londonees' – the generic term which covers all Bangladeshis working abroad, in any part of Britain, in Saudia Arabia or in the Gulf states. These often stand empty, occupied only by a caretaker, awaiting the owner's

Survival

Ken Prideaux-Brune



Khasdobir Primary School -- girls with teacher preparing farewell show for us.



Khasdobir Primary School -- second shift files in.

return from abroad. Scattered among them are clusters of one room huts, with flimsy walls, mud floors and thatched roofs (which start to leak after a year and have to be replaced). These are the homes of the day labourers and rickshaw pullers, whose life is a daily struggle for survival. Many of them are landless people from other parts of the country who have come to Sylhet looking for work.

One evening we went to a village market, traders squatting on the ground with a paraffin lamp and their small stock of vegetables, or rice, or fish, or second hand clothes. One of the traders was a boy of about eight with a basket of sweets made by his widowed mother. He comes to the market every morning at about seven. At about 11 he leaves to walk the two miles to school. After school he picks up the sweets his mother has made during the day and returns to the market until seven or eight in the evening. That's typical of the lives of so many of the children from an early age. They have no real childhood at all. To see adult eyes in these friendly young faces is heartbreaking.

On our first walk we met an emaciated old man. You could see every bone in his body. Yet he struggles to pedal a rickshaw every day, even though, in his frail state, he has to rest for half an hour after every journey. Later on that same walk Harun suddenly excused himself and went to visit a hut a little way off the path. After five minutes he returned and said quietly: 'God sent me to that house today'. He explained that there was a girl of about 14 who had gone on to high school, which unlike the primary school is not free. She was in tears because her widowed mother could no longer afford the fees of 25 taka a month. At the official rate of exchange that's a little over 50p, which doesn't sound much. But it's half a day's pay for those on average earnings -- and most earn much less than that. Just one case where the Khasdobir Action Group, with what in our terms is a tiny amount of money, can transform that girl's life chances.

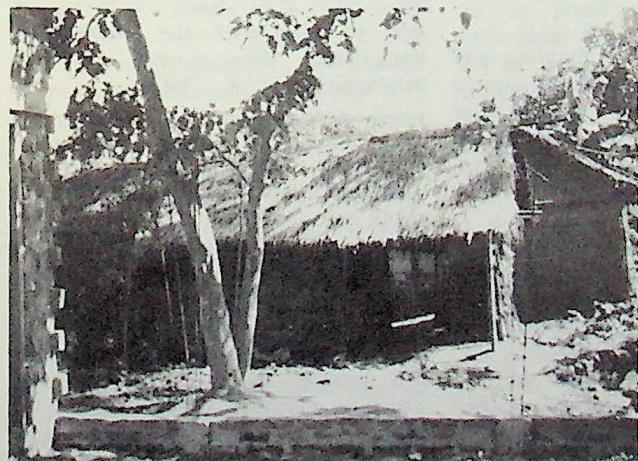
In addition to emergency help of this kind the Action Group pays a small supplementary allowance (in our money

it comes to just over £3 a month) to 20 poor widows. We visited, for instance, a lady who'd suffered a stroke. The day we called she was able, for the first time in three months, to sit up in bed. She and her daughter had been generously given a corner in their tiny home by another desperately poor family but the family couldn't afford to share any of their meagre supply of food.

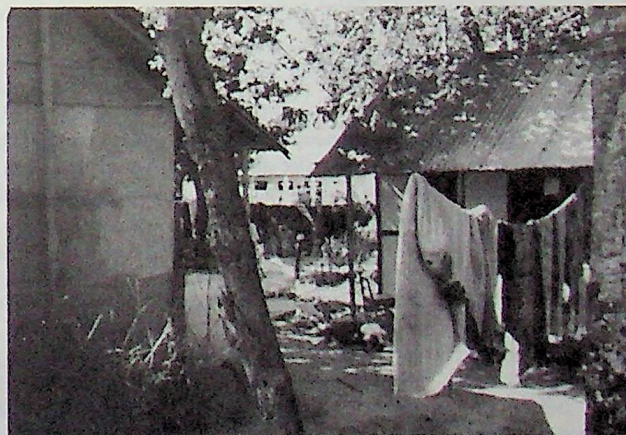
It's hard to comprehend what the daily struggle for survival means. We visited a widow with four children, aged from eight to 15 or thereabouts. The children were friendly and playful and neither they nor the mother asked for any help or made any complaint. She even wanted to borrow tea to give us. What we didn't notice, but Harun and Peter did, was that no cooking fire had been lit, although it was after five in the afternoon. That family would have had nothing at all to eat that day if we hadn't called.

The widows who receive regular help are all anxious to find ways of becoming self-

contd p 10



Village Housing.



Village Housing -- houses rebuilt by the project after flood damage.

The Struggle for Survival

contd

supporting. One woman, for instance, asked if she could have four month's allowance in advance. That would enable her to build a small lean-to on the end of her house, which she could rent out. And then she'd need no further help. Another, who's totally blind, asked for a loan of 800 taka to buy a tellagari which she can rent out. She's repaying the loan at the rate of 200 taka a month and, once it's paid off, she'll have a regular income.

We visited another woman, with four daughters, the oldest about 15. When her husband died they had been taken in by her husband's brother. However, the brother had developed TB, was no longer able to work and had had to throw her out. The Action Group had built a little house and discussed what skills the family possessed. These proved to be knitting and cane work. The Group made them a loan with which to buy materials and the family is now just about self-supporting.

In a place where malnutrition is the norm, TB is endemic. The Action Group helps 20 TB patients at any one time with medicine and, just as important, milk and eggs. We met one girl of about ten. She was a normally alert and vivacious child but a few months ago had been apathetic



Children and parents at a meeting to discuss a possible new 'School under the Sky'.

and listless. A glass of milk and an egg a day had been the simple means of transforming that human life. And we in Europe agonise over our milk lakes and butter mountains.

One morning we went with Harun and Peter to a meeting of parents and guardians for a first discussion of a possible new School under the Sky. These people were among the very poorest that we met. Their only furniture was coconut matting spread on the mud floor. Yet chairs had been borrowed for the foreign guests. When the meeting was finished a

table was produced. And a tablecloth. And cups of tea. Where it had all come from I've no idea but to receive such gracious hospitality from people who have absolutely nothing was a deeply humbling experience.

This month I have tried to introduce you to Khasdobir and to indicate some of the ways in which the Khasdobir Action Group responds to the human need by which it is surrounded. Next month I will describe the major projects with which the Group is engaged.

TRANQUILLISER ADDICTION

Jacqui Barr and
Melanie Stephenson

'One in five women and one in ten men in this country will at some time in their lives take tranquillisers!' This means that each year vast numbers of people are either taking tranquillisers for the first time or continuing to take them. Many people who were given these drugs desperately needed them at the time to help cope with a period of acute stress or a crisis in their lives. When tranquillisers were first available they were seen as the 'wonder drug' with no side effects and no risk of addiction. Now, however, we know better and many of those who 'desperately needed them' are now addicted, having had many repeat

prescriptions, some for months, and many for years. Nothing has been done to solve or cure the patients' original reasons for taking them. They have merely been 'blanketed', and in all too many cases this has led to a life of addiction.

'That's Life' and MIND really stirred up the whole problem and brought it to the public's attention when they conducted their survey into tranquillisers. The survey revealed the misery and 'half life' long term minor tranquilliser use had created and the real horrors people had suffered when trying to come off them. Coming off tranquillisers has been

'Hard Drug' addiction is a very serious problem in modern society. What is often not recognised, though, is that a quite unknown number of people — certainly several thousands — have a serious addiction to drugs which were intended to help and which were, and are still being, medically prescribed. Jacqui Barr and Melanie Stephenson are members of the Toc H Staff whose main work is with Friendship Circles in the North East. As a direct result of that work they have come face to face with the problem of tranquilliser addiction and are now helping to combat it. — Ed.

described as being ten times worse than coming off heroin! As a result of this publicity, and what we learned at conferences and workshops on minor tranquillisers, as well as numerous enquiries from people trying to come off these drugs, we decided to set up a support group, to offer that extra support and contact with others in similar situations which these people needed. We were directly approached at this time by a social worker in Redcar who felt that in

We will Remember...

Editor's Note:

Due to pressure of space, the Editor usually has to reduce the length of tributes sent in — and will continue to do so unless the author specifically requests 'All or nothing'!

We regret to announce the death of the following members:

In July

Arthur O Thompson (Bakewell)

In September

Reg H Still (Bakewell)

In October

Godfrey 'Goff' Taylor (Newport)

In November

Annie M Gurney (Dover)

I Winifred Nye (Dover)

Edith M Whitaker (Morecambe)

In December

F T 'Eric' Brazier (Purton)

Frank Broomfield (Cromer)

Lucy A Clark (Bromborough)

Leonie E Falla (Richmond-Surrey)

Roland Gething (Aston Manor)

E 'Eddie' Gillis (Tayforth District)

Jack Hardcastle (Lindley)

Walter Hopkins (Cosby)

Alistair M MacPhail

(Camberwell & Dulwich)

William Randell (Southdown District)

Herbert F J Rutty (Trowbridge)

Denis F C Skinner (Folkestone)

In January

George H Corser (Wulfrun)

Mary Dalrymple

(Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay)

Kenneth E Darby (Ashby)

Franklin J Garside (Buckingham)

Kathleen A Grimmo (Central Overseas)

Joan B Neaum (Allestree)

Mary Mayberry Smith (Cheltenham)

E M 'Millie' Yeomans (Pant)

Louie Martin was the wife of Vic Martin, known to all Toc H members who ever went to Warden Manor. Before her marriage to Vic she was well known for her work with Toc H in the Luton District, and was a frequent visitor to the Old House. She had a long and complicated illness which she bore with great courage, and which led to her death in June last year.

Marjorie Hennessy was introduced to Toc H by her mother, and became totally devoted to our Movement, and during her many years of service she probably held every office at Branch and District level, being our District Pilot until

ill health compelled her to resign in May 1986. Marjorie is sorely missed in her Branch and by District, but her work goes on and we give thanks for her life and example.

PC

'I first met Jerry Sheehan in 1972 when Gilbert and I and our two youngest boys went to live in part of the Wendover Office Building where we stayed for two years. During that time his wonderful sense of humour and kindly, courteous manner was a blessing to us all. Later on I was privileged to work in the same office, and experienced his dedication and caring over

her area there was a desperate need for such a group. As a result our first group started. We then received calls from people in the Stockton area who worked and needed an evening group and so February last year our second group began.

The aims of our groups are to provide support, care and understanding in an atmosphere of trust and friendship; to offer alternative ways of coping with stress and anxiety — relaxation techniques — reference books. Tranquilliser withdrawal is a slow process. You cannot decide to suddenly stop taking all tranquillisers one day and expect no withdrawal symptoms. Your body reacts very severely to this and the varying consequences have been summed up many times as a feeling of 'going totally mad'. Very gradual reduction, preferably with a reduction plan from your doctor, which allows your body to tell you when it is less dependent seems to be the easiest to bear. There are still withdrawal symptoms, eg panic attacks, dizziness, pins and needles, sweating, numbness, confusion, lack of confidence, but these may not be as severe. One lady

who comes from Stockton group was on Valium for 13 years. She has now been off it completely for 14 months but still gets some withdrawal symptoms. She is, however, a very determined lady and will not let it beat her. She says that she feels like a new person now — she is free, she cares about others and herself, her skin is no longer a yellowy colour, she has energy and is regaining her confidence in herself more as each day passes. This lady is a great help to others in the group as she is proof that you can beat tranquilliser addiction and win through. The group has helped her enormously to realise that people cared, that they would listen and not judge her but accept the reality of her suffering; she was not 'going mad' — these were the after effects of years of Valium. To see someone change in this way is the greatest reward we could have. We still get occasional desperate phone calls from her, but she knows she is winning this battle and can now use her experience to help others through the same situation.

'Helping others to help others'. To us this is very definitely another example of Toc H in action!

his work. Each Toc H member that Jerry dealt with in his capacity as Deeds of Covenant Secretary was treated with much care and consideration, Jerry often working late to ensure that personal letters went out to those who had been bereaved or who had some special problem which he felt called for the "personal touch". Socially, he was a joy, and our annual Christmas Party was much enlivened by his presence. His prayers too were typically Jerry, and gave us help and inspiration. One memorable morning, his own particular brand of humour coming to the fore he remarked, "I shan't keep you long, as Henry VIII said to his six wives!" He was a real Christian gentleman and will be greatly missed by all who knew him.'

RJF

Goff Taylor died as he was preparing to attend Newport's Annual Rededication Service on 30 October. He was 86.

Goff was a founder member of the Branch which he served faithfully and very regularly for 57 years. He held the post of Branch Treasurer for 19 years and only relinquished the job on his 70th birthday. He also served as Jobmaster and had several periods as Chairman.

Goff was always most meticulous and neat both in appearance and work, and he used these two assets, together with his Christian way of life, to further the cause of Toc H in Newport. He will be greatly missed.

'Toc H Scotland lost one of its most loyal members on the sudden death of Eddie Gillies on the night of 2 December 1986.

'Eddie was afflicted with a very bad stammer but that did not prevent him from faithful service in Toc H and in his church, but it made social contacts difficult so we were delighted when he eventually married happily, but deeply shocked when he died 18 months later aged 57.

'For many years he was a servitor at Edinburgh University and the esteem in which he was held by all who knew him was demonstrated by the crowded crematorium chapel at his funeral. He will be sadly missed amongst us all.'

FMB

George Henry Corser was a member of Cambridge Branch until September 1985. He joined Toc H in 1937, and as a soldier during the First World War had visited Talbot House 'to get a bath'. His many activities in Toc H included 17 years of Hospital Broadcasting at Addenbrooke's Hospital.

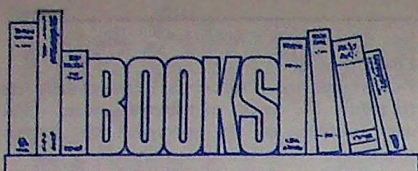
He died on 7 January and will be greatly missed.

HHS

Millie Yeomans, of Pant Branch, died on 13 January, 'She was', says Gwyn Morris, 'a generous friend and a most warm-hearted person, and her untimely death has been a terrible blow to her friends and to the branch.'

Helen Dickinson, who died on 17 January had been the Builders' Secretary in the Manchester area for many years, and a member of Toc H since 1940. Those Members and Builders who knew her are saddened by her death.

We give thanks for their lives



Open Forum

'Prayers for Peace'

Selected by Archbishop Robert Runcie and Cardinal Basil Hume

Inspired by the Pope's historic Day of Prayer for Peace held in Assisi in October 1986, this anthology is offered as a spiritual resource for all who wish to work and pray for peace in 1987.

As the Archbishop and the Cardinal write in their foreword: *'We have chosen this selection of readings and prayers from a variety of authors, times, places and religions because we wanted to extend the vision of Assisi. They are an invitation to Christians to join us on our pilgrimage of prayer, faith and harmony. They also provide witness from other faiths of a profound sense of the divine and of a concern for the future of humanity.'*

The anthology includes over 120 readings and prayers by some of the world's greatest religious thinkers, past and present. Fourteen religions and over 25 nations are represented, including all the major areas of war and unrest in the world at present.

All royalties to be donated to Amnesty International.

Published by SPCK, Holy Trinity Church, Marylebone Rd, London NW1 4DU.
Price: £1.95 paperback.

In praise of public transport

In response to Ken Prideaux Brune's article 'The Tyranny of the car' (Point Three, December) I write as one who drove a car for some 30 odd years when a car was a necessity for a variety of reasons, not least, for being the only means by which my dear elderly mother could enjoy the countryside until she died at the age of 92.

I thank God for guiding me to make sacrifices in order to learn to drive and buy a car. I equally thank him for guiding me one Saturday in August 1985 to decide to give it all up, a decision I have never regretted since the burden of owning a car was lifted from my shoulders. I no longer have to sit isolated in a metal box, facing the stresses and strains that go with driving under modern conditions, to say nothing of coping with the increasing number of maniacs on the roads these days.

I can now enjoy the presence of fellow travellers, listen to the lonely soul who pours out his/her life story, from which it is obvious they are one of the many lonely souls who have no-one to talk to at home, and welcome someone who is prepared to listen to them, or simply to pass a pleasant time-of-day with someone. You can enjoy seeing the countryside around you instead of looking at a ribbon of road with its litter

of cars and lorries etc. And how enjoyable are those train journeys, and what fun it is to buy a British Rail timetable, finding your way around it planning your journeys. So I endorse Ken's article. Travel far less by car, give it up altogether if it is not really necessary, and get out and about by public transport, especially by British Rail. Patronise them so much they may be persuaded to re-lay and re-open branch lines, thus providing much needed employment for others and avoiding the infernal combustion engine on the murderous motorways — no, I do not own shares in BR, but I do want to help others to find the pleasure I have found since getting rid of my car. New doors and greater adventures have been opened up for me, as I hope they will be for you.

Winnie Nelson
Oxford

Lindridge House

As one of the 'oldies' in the Movement who has recently spent a delightful weekend at Lindridge House with Jane and Philip Douch, may I through your columns, commend this excellent venture to all Toc H members of whatever age group.

Living together and sharing an experience is one of the earliest concepts

Forthcoming Events

March

- | | | |
|-------|---|------|
| 1 | Unemployment Sunday | |
| 6- 8 | N Wales & N West Training Weekend, Alison House | |
| 7 | Colsterdale Dance, British Legion Rooms, Huddersfield | Open |
| 12 | South Eastern REC | |
| 13-15 | Project No 1 Last Chance at Lecky Lake | Open |
| 13-15 | 'The Meaning of Faith', Cuddesdon | Open |
| 13-15 | Central Councillors' Weekend, Alison House | |
| 14 | South Western Regional Council | |
| 20-22 | Project No 2 Conservation Weekend | Open |
| 27-29 | Project No 3 Come to Cuddesdon Gardening Weekend | Open |
| 27-29 | Welcome Weekend, Alison House | |

April

- | | | |
|-------|---|------|
| 1- 3 | Project No 4 Gardening Gala, Alison House | Open |
| 3- 5 | Reflections, Lindridge House | Open |
| 10-12 | Project No 5 Weekend Away for Residents of Shenley Hospital | Open |
| 16-19 | Easter at Alison House | Open |
| 18-25 | Project No 6 Last Chance at Lecky Lake | Open |
| 20-25 | Holiday at Lindridge House | Open |

- | | | |
|--------|-------------------------------------|------|
| 24-26 | Project No 7 Madness at Mundesley | Open |
| 25 | N Wales and N West Regional Council | |
| 25 | Southern Regional Council | |
| 25- | Project No 8 | |
| -3 May | Conservation with a difference | Open |

May

- | | | |
|-------|---|------|
| 1- 4 | Poetry Weekend, Alison House | Open |
| 2- 4 | National Youth Weekend | Open |
| 3 | Marafun | Open |
| 8-10 | Natural History Weekend, Alison House | Open |
| 9 | Notts & Derby Area Gathering | |
| 9 | N Wales and N West Regional Festival, Nantwich | Open |
| 11 | South Eastern REC | |
| 11-15 | National Staff Gathering | |
| 15-17 | Notts & Derby Area Weekend, Alison House | |
| 16 | W Midlands & S Wales Regional Council | |
| 16 | Mid Eastern Regional AGM | Open |
| 16-17 | South Western Region Quiet Days at Compton Darville | |
| 29-31 | 'The Meaning of Faith', Cuddesdon | Open |
| 29-31 | Stockport District Weekend, Alison House | |

of our Movement but it is as valid today as ever it was in the 1920s. I would suggest that individual members should choose a suitable weekend from the House programme, invite a non member/s and take them for a few days to Kingsteignton where they would learn far more about Toc H than they ever will from seminars, reading material and chats.

Let's make 1987 a turning point in the growth of our Movement and make it possible for others to enjoy what we have cherished over the years. Regions, Areas, Districts and Branches would do well to include this matter on their agendas in 1987 as Lindridge House and other Centres are there for us to use.

Edgar Stickley
Wyre Forest

Talbot House, Poperinge

Many visitors to Talbot House in Poperinge will be sorry to learn that Miss Josefin Cornette feels that the time has come to hand over as Secretary of the Belgian Friends of Talbot House. She will however still take an active part in the Friends and she hopes that visitors to the Old House will continue to visit her and her sister Anna where a warm welcome always awaits them at 57 Doorn Straat.

Her successor as Secretary is Mrs Katrien Verstraete, a daughter-in-law of the Town Clerk and Honorary Treasurer of the Talbot House Association, Mr Georges Verstraete. She herself is a descendant of Burgomaster Van Wallaghern who received King George V when he came to Poperinge immediately after World War One. The Chairman of our Belgian Friends remains Mrs Marie-Jeanne de Sagher, wife of Mr William de Sagher, son of another Burgomaster who did much for Talbot House. Together with a strong committee the Friends are therefore in good hands and we wish them well for the future. Talbot House owes a great debt to the Belgian Friends not only for several material contributions they have made but also for their unfailing friendliness and help over the years. The Garden Party after our Annual General Meetings is an example of this.

Miss Josefin Cornette was the founder of the Belgian Friends and comes from a family who over two decades have done much for Toc H and the Old House. It was to them that the then Bishop of Bruges (Mgr de Smet) through the Dean and Pastor de Bree turned to extend the hand of friendship to Toc H. Talbot House had until then been looked upon

as 'The English House' and except for a few local families and friends no-one entered its doors. Today that is all changed but a great deal of the ground work has been due to Josefin and her later sister Elisabeth to both of whom we are deeply grateful.

Jack Trefusis
Honiton

When lately perusing 'Point Three' I was delighted to see, as an old-timer that suitable notice and action was being taken following remarks made by some of us last year when discussing the future of the Old House. We felt that it should be the aim of all members to visit the birthplace of Toc H at least once. At Central Council Noel Cornick hailed the support and impetus now being built up around Talbot House. This must continue, for Toc H without the Old House and the Upper Room cannot really live.

Albert Bowyer
Havant, Hants

Peter East

The article appearing in 'The Independent' on Saturday, 24 January has doubtless already raised comment.

After the commendable reports from Keith Rea in Point Three in November 1984, and the reports from John Burgess during April/May 1985 — followed by appeals for the Peter East Fund and again, with the ongoing reports from Ken Prideaux-Brune it is disappointing to note the complete absence of any reference to Toc H in the press article.

One must assume that the reported speech in the article is unquestionable — particularly in column one, paragraph three quote: 'This has nothing to do with religion or anything else'. Considering that statement plus the reported general rejection of Peter's effort in Sylhet, is it possible that an astute sub-editor has ruled out a Toc H connection? I feel the oversight is too obvious to be without motive.

Les Jones
Newtown, Powys

After seeing the lovely and happy photograph of Peter East and his school under the sky, plus the well written article in 'The Independent' of Saturday, 24 January, I write to register my disappointment that in an article of some 450 words, the name of Toc H did not appear once.

Was it from a Toc H source and were we sub-edited out, or did it come from a non-Toc H source? Whichever it is, I feel a word of explanation is due. The work that Peter did in East London, and his subsequent early retirement and work in Bangladesh, have been one of the most important things that has happened to Toc H in the past two decades, and the affection and respect that Peter commands within Toc H is second to none. His work presents us with a superb point to make when people ask 'What does Toc H do today' and I have used it many times when explaining Toc H to sympathetic listeners.

We get very little national publicity nowadays, and I realise that Peter East is not exclusive to Toc H. It is good to see him getting the publicity and recognition that his work deserves, and neither can 'The Independent' be expected to provide any free publicity for us. But this Movement and Peter's work are so linked that they cannot easily be divided, and long may it be so. On this occasion somewhere along the line we have lost out.

Terry Gray
Harpden

These two letters arrived in time for inclusion in the March issue, and they represent the feelings of many members. The article in 'The Independent' to which both writers refer was the final piece in a short series about Bangladesh which the paper had run. The original report included Peter's connections with Toc H, and mentioned the support which the Movement continues to give, but this was edited out, presumably because the significance of the connection was not understood. A letter has gone to 'The Independent's' Editor which it is hoped will clarify matters — but, of course whether or not it is published is up to him.

Les Jones raises two further points which can be answered here. Bangladesh is a strongly Muslim country. Peter is not there as a Christian missionary, and it would jeopardise his future there for him to give any other impression.

Finally, Sylhet is a large urban area, with many outlying suburbs and villages, and the first of those villages in which Peter lived was unable to accept him. Khasdobir, though, is another part of Sylhet where, with the valuable support of Harun Ahmed, Peter has won acceptance and continues to have considerable success, as the article makes plain.— Ed.

A PERSONAL VIEW

Inner Light

Swami Tripurananda

Swami Tripurananda is a Hindu, and a senior monk at the Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre at Bourne End.

'Light' is an important word in many of the world's religious traditions. Quakerism — of special appeal because it was the tradition into which I was born — speaks of the 'Inner Light'; Toc H, similarly, is built around the saying of Jesus, 'Let your Light so shine before men . . .' In Vedanta — the universal aspect of Hinduism — the Light Divine is the Consciousness in conscious beings, a Consciousness of which, unfortunately, most of us, with some blessed exceptions, are largely unconscious! We identify ourselves with the insentient body and mind, seldom with the Soul or Self which is of the nature of universal Consciousness.

In order to realise the Self in this very life, three things, it is said, come as the special gifts of God: a human body, the thirst for Truth and a Teacher who can show us the Light. The goal of life, then, is to know that we are the Light Divine and in realising this we become free of the superstitions of 'me and mine' — not at all an easy path. Only with this realisation, however, do we begin to live and not to be lived; do we truly understand the meaning of Love. Difficult though the task may be, we must proceed cheerfully, for if what we have said is true, then spirituality is the best thing in the world and therefore the most joyous. How the universe would change if we could consciously fill it with God! Dave was a splendid example.

Dave was a cheerful soul who performed the humdrum acts of life with a smiling face and an open heart. His was the Yoga of Bicycle Maintenance and through this he worked at the rusty raggedness of life transforming it into a shining model that made his friends rejoice and of Dave himself an integrated personality.

Dave kept a bicycle shop in Bedford. He was a great friend of the family and as we lived just around the corner I came to know him well. Everybody in Bedford, it seemed, knew Dave. Masters at school riding past his shop on their bicycles hailed him cheerfully, occupants of cars honked their horns at him as they negotiated the congested street and every shopkeeper treated him with singular affection. His shop was not only a Mecca for sick bicycles but for rugby enthusiasts of all ages.

The shop fascinated me; it was a glorious, oily hell of tangled machinery. Parts of bicycles lay everywhere. Piled up crazily on the floor, hanging dangerously from wall and ceiling — chains, mudguards, gears, hubs, saddles, pedals, frames and tyres — some new but many very, very old. At the back of the shop there must have been a surreptitious door for, through this, in a most clandestine manner, Dave would often emerge munching a cheese sandwich lovingly made by his semi-invalid wife.

Dave himself was of wiry build and had grey hair, though not much of it; his spectacles must have been through many a scrum and his overalls had obviously — well, how can I say it politely — defied the best brand of washing powder for many a long year. I loved Dave and respected him even more. My young mind deified him into something of a sage though, it is true, that when a customer swung through the front door and he hurried towards him or her, Dave would invariably bark his shins on a piece of iron hardware on the floor and the words that came to his lips were hardly to be discovered in the Sermon on the Mount! At such moments of great intensity Dave would peer across the shop, see me trying to wipe the grin from my face and would bark at me, somewhat humorously, 'Now, young Carter, don't you go telling Tootes what you've just heard!' ('Tootes', or Mr Cooper, was a friend of both of us, a rugby enthusiast and, more importantly, a senior English master at the school I attended.)

Dave was a member of Toc H and from him it was that, between the mending of punctures and seized-up gears, I learnt of Tubby Clayton and other divines. But it was from Dave himself that I saw at first-hand the art of sitting loose to life — for God knows where the money came from to pay the bills; all I ever saw him with was one or two half-crowns extricated from his oily person with much difficulty. Difficulties there surely were and yet there was a divine light in that Bedford bicycle shop.

College took me away from home and it was London that claimed me after that. It was in London that, because of my desire to find out more of what was meant by meditation, my attention became centred on Vedanta. Eventually, with the blessings of my parents, I went to live with a Swami, a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order, to receive from him a training in the life of the Spirit.

The monk's ideal is a demanding one and, in truth, I don't make a very good job of it. But off and on, throughout the 20 odd years of my life in the Order so far, memories of Dave and the radiance of his bicycle shop come back to me. In that dark, oily shop I was privileged to gaze at something very beautiful. Few scriptures and sermons gave me that sense of inner joy and wonder that I felt as I watched Dave at work on chain and puncture.

Tubby Clayton would have been proud of him. Dave had turned the difficulties of life to his own advantage.

Personality Point

Welcome

The following new members were registered during December/January:

Mrs Grace Millergill (Broughton Astley W)
John S Hughes, Mrs Winifred Hughes (Corby J), William E Evans (Corwen M), Mrs Jessica Summers, Mrs Margaret Godfrey, Eric Burrows, Rev Raymond Webb (Llandrindod Wells J), Keith Readings, Miss Clair G Whitehead (Loddon Vale District), Stanley G Doorey (Nailsea M), Mrs Gwendoline Manson, Mrs Vera M Tompkins (Rushden Afternoon W), John H Giddings (Shirehampton M), Alfred Daintree, Geoffrey France (Uckfield M).

A warm welcome to 16 new members

Congratulations!

Alf Cromwell of Wigmore and Rainham Branch, was surprised and delighted to be awarded the Bill Warnette Award just before Christmas. The award, one of the most prestigious in the Medway Area, is made each year to a pensioner who has given particularly valuable service to local charities. Congratulations Alf.



Photo: Chatham, Rochester & Gillingham News

ALL MEMBERS AND FRIENDS
ARE INVITED TO ATTEND

The North Wales & North West Regional Festival Service

on

SATURDAY, 9 MAY 1987

at 3.pm
in

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NANTWICH

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THE VERY REVEREND
LAWRENCE JACKSON
Provost of Blackburn

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Choir Director: Adrian P Jessett

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ALISON HOUSE

Have you reserved your place at Alison House yet?
There are still a few spaces available on some
of our Spring and Summer Activities

GARDENING GALA 1-3 April £15
Come and sort out the ravages of winter, with plenty of time provided for relaxation as well.

EASTER HOUSEPARTY 16-19 April £36 + VAT
Led by Rev Alan Johnson and Rev Colin Rudd. A relaxed and reflective few days with time to explore the countryside and the events surrounding Holy Week and Easter.

POETRY WEEKEND 1-4 May £36 + VAT
A chance for the poets amongst us to put an 'Accent on Poetry'. Amateur and professional poets contribute through read-arounds and workshops. A very popular weekend.

NATURAL HISTORY WEEKEND 8-10 May £24 + VAT
In conjunction with the Mansfield History Society, a weekend of walks and illustrated talks. Looking at the beauty of Derbyshire in the Cromford area. Another very popular weekend.

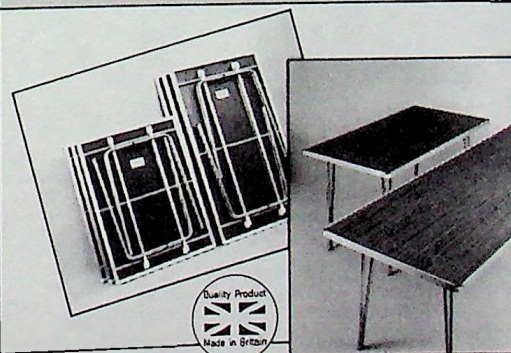
ACTIVITY AND LEISURE WEEKEND 5-7 June £24 + VAT
A truly traditional mixture. Talks, walks, games and fun. Hosted by Mrs Marjorie Berry the programme provides time to visit the local attractions, factory and mill shops etc. Early booking is recommended for this popular event.

Our SUMMER PROGRAMME in 1987 includes the following:

Summer School 13-20 June	£85 + £5 Conference Fee
Holiday Weeks led by	
John and Betty Cutt 11-18 July	£85.10
John and Joan Biggerstaff 18-25 July	£85.10
Painting Week (H Muscott) 1-8 August	£87.40
Marjorie Berry 8-15 August	£85.10
N Brew and B Dodgson 22-29 August	£89.70

For further details and booking form send a large SAE to: Derek Bartrop, Alison House, Intake Lane, Cromford, Derbyshire. Tel: Wirksworth 2316.

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Cuddesdon House - Our Own Centre

You can be sure of a warm welcome when you come to Cuddesdon House, the Centre which belongs to the whole Movement. If you haven't been yet then why not make 1987 a year to remember and come and stay! If you have been before, then it could be time to come and renew your acquaintance. Make 1987 a 'Come to Cuddesdon' year!

Cuddesdon is our residential base nearest the capital and is within easy reach of Winchester, Bristol, Worcester, Gloucester and Windsor as well as the Berkshire Downs, the Cotswolds and the Chilterns - to say nothing of the Thames Valley!

It is a superb place to use for parties as small as 15 or as large as 30 as well as being a useful place for a night's stopover on a long journey.

We have planned two weeks; 23-28 May and 15-22 August when members are invited to bring their families and friends and to use the house as a base from which to visit London or explore the Thames Valley from one to seven nights.

The special rate for the hire will be £5 per night, Bed and Breakfast and £10 Bed, Breakfast and Evening Meal. No charge for children under two. There are reductions for children under 12 sharing a family room.

As usual Painting and Music Weeks will be 18-25 July and 24-31 October.

For the energetic there are two Gardening Projects, 27-29 March and 9-11 October. There are opportunities on these for all grades of gardening skills.

The weekends 13-15 March, 29-31 May and 25-27 September are of a reflective nature when speakers from other religions will talk to us about their Faiths.

John Burgess and his family will join Liz and Anne for a Christmas Houseparty 24-28 December. Come and share it with us.

As well as these planned activities we welcome groups who wish to cater for themselves as well as run Toc H weekends and weeks of the traditional nature.

OPEN EVENTS AT CUDDESDON

March	13-15	The Meaning of Faith	Apply to: Carol Button
	27-29	Gardening Project	Anne Desrousseaux
May	23-28	Holiday Break	Anne Evans
	29-31	The Meaning of Faith	Carol Button
July	18-25	Painting and Music Week	Colin Rudd
August	15-22	Holiday Breaks	Anne Evans
September	25-29	The Meaning of Faith	Carol Button
October	9-11	Gardening Project	Anne Desrousseaux
	24-31	Painting and Music Week	Colin Rudd
December	24-28	Christmas Houseparty	John Burgess or Anne Evans

Further ideas and suggestions are always welcomed.

For more information about the Centre please write to Anne Evans, Cuddesdon House, Wheatley Road, Cuddesdon, Oxford, or telephone 08677 2004.

Small Ads

Small advertisements must be received (with remittance) five weeks before publication day, which is the 23rd of the preceding month. The charge is 5p a word (minimum 50p) plus VAT, to Point Three Magazine. Rates of display advertisements can be obtained from the Editorial Office, Toc H, 1 Forest Close, Wendover. Telephone: 0296 623911.

Hythe, Kent, luxury six berth caravan, fully equipped, situated on pleasant sight with Club House. Buses for Hythe Town Centre, Dover, etc stop at sight. Fully fitted with gas fire, cooker, fridge, shower, WC, TV, radio. £50 per week including gas/electric. Contact: Tony Cock, 7 Tourney Close, Lympe, Hythe, Kent CT21 4LL. Tel: 0303 69407.

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Holidays at Falmouth Toc H House, 12 Lister Street. £55 per week. Accommodation for five plus cot. Available whole year (excluding week 8-15 August). Gatiss. Tel: 0326 (Falmouth) 312689.

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